

**REMARKS**

The present amendment is submitted prior to the issuance of a first Office Action and simultaneously with the filing of the present application.

With this amendment applicants have amended the specification, cancelled claims 1 to 11 and added new claims 12 to 21, all in an effort to place the application in better condition for examination.

Favorable action on the present application is respectfully requested.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application; however, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,

COHEN, PONTANI, LIEBERMAN & PAVANE

By

Klaus P. Stoffel

Reg. No. 31,668

551 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1210

New York, New York 10176

(212) 687-2770

Dated: January 28, 2002

In the Specification:

Page 1, starting at line 22:

In view of the above, the object of the present invention is to produce a middle node, [of the kind] as mentioned previously, involving low tooling costs and, thereby, to reduce the cost of post-production processing. In addition, efforts are made to be able to produce the middle nodes for left-hand-drive and right-hand-drive vehicles using the same tooling.

starting at line 35:

According to a further detail of the invention an integral frame bracket [resp.] or frame hoop may be formed on the outside of one side of the frame, the walls of which frame bracket are aligned with the two parallel neighbouring frame walls. In order to facilitate the joining of this middle node e.g. to a supporting arm projecting out of a vehicle tunnel, two sleeves for bolts are provided in opposite lying corners of the frame or frame bracket on the frame, said sleeves likewise being formed in the extrusion process.

Page 2, starting at line 15:

Fig. 1: a perspective view of a transverse beam with [support-ing]  
supporting arm and so called middle node as stiffening  
element for a private car;

Fig. 2: an enlarged section from figure 1;

[Fig.] Figs. 3, 4: cross-sections through different versions of the support arm;

Fig. 5: an enlarged perspective view of the middle nodes shown in figures 1 and 2;

[Fig.] Figs. 6, 8, 10: perspective views of three further versions of [trans-verse] transverse beams with middle nodes;

[Fig.] Figs. 7, 9, 11: enlarged perspective views of the middle nodes shown in figures 6, 8 and 10;

Fig. 12: a perspective view of another middle node;

Fig. 13: an end view of the middle node shown in figure 12;

Fig. 14: a front elevation relating to figures 12 and 13;

[Fig.] Figs. 15, 18, 21: perspective views of three further designs of middle node;

[Fig.] Figs. 16, 19, 22: front elevations of the middle nodes shown in figures 15,  
18, and 21; and

[Fig.] Figs. 17, 20, 23: end views relating to figures 16, 19 and 22.

Page 3, starting at line 19:

The middle node 20 serves the purpose of providing a transition from the driver-side support arm 14, which is in the form of a hollow section and approximately quadratic in cross-section, to the passenger-side support arm 16 which is aligned with the support arm 14. The [latter] passenger side support arm 16 is also a hollow section, the cross-section of which is likewise quadratic and smaller than that of the other support arm 14. In addition, the thickness of the four sheet walls 17 of the longer support arm 16 is less than the thickness of the walls 15 of the support arm 14 for the driver side. Also the middle node 20 should accommodate this transition in wall thickness onto which the support arms 14, 16 are pushed in direction x.

Page 4, starting at line 10:

Provided on the outside, at the free inner corner 28 of the push-fit body 22, is an integral diagonal strip 36 of breadth  $b_1$  which runs to the above mentioned neighbouring, diagonally opposite corner  $31_a$  of the push-fit body 22 where an intervening sleeve 38 for a bolt is situated. The corners  $31$ ,  $31_a$  are rounded. A second sleeve 38 for a bolt is provided in the other corner  $31_a$ , parallel to and opposite the sleeve 38 connected to the diagonal strip 36 ; in

the installed position both sleeves 38 are aligned with the openings 18 at the upper corners 13 of the support arm 12[, 12<sub>d</sub>] to accommodate bolts or connecting elements along with the openings[ 12, 12<sub>a</sub>].

the paragraph starting at line 30:

The breadth b of the push-fit body 32<sub>b</sub> in frame 30 in figures 8 and 9 is the same as its breadth b<sub>1</sub>; otherwise, this middle node 20<sub>b</sub> is the same shape as the middle node 20 described above in figures 1-5. Middle node 20<sub>c</sub> (figures 10, 11) corresponds essentially to middle node 20<sub>b</sub> in figures 8 and 9 with an additional frame bracket 40 in the design shown in figure 7.

the paragraph starting at line 36:

Middle node 20<sub>d</sub> in figures 12 to 14, of overall height [i] e of approx. 115 mm and a transverse dimension e<sub>1</sub> of approx. 70 mm, exhibits a wall thickness t of 4 mm. Both a corner 31<sub>b</sub> of the frame 30 and the diagonal corner 41b of the frame bracket 40 form an angle w of 45°. The same holds for a corner region 23 of push-fit body 22<sub>d</sub>. This is integrally formed on a diagonal strip 36 which here is continuous and makes an angle w<sub>1</sub> of 45° with the side wall 32. The overall length n of the middle node 20<sub>d</sub> corresponds approximately with its side wall e of approx. 100 mm, the outer height a<sub>1</sub> of the push-fit body 22<sub>a</sub>, here 55 mm, its breadth a<sub>2</sub> 40 mm.